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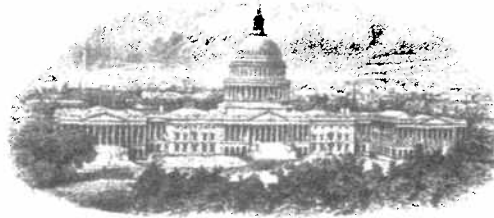
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**Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0923**

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October 7, 2009

The Honorable Dr. Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
1300 Defense Pentagon 3D844  
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As you and the Pentagon general counsel continue your review of the policy known as Don't Ask, Don't Tell, I write to bring to your attention several recent developments that underscore my longstanding position on the matter – it must be repealed now. Earlier this week, National Security Adviser GEN Jones announced that President Obama will focus “at the right time” on how to overturn the ban. With over 400 brave servicemen and women lost to Don't Ask, Don't Tell this year alone, and a to-be-determined strategy in Afghanistan, the time is now to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

In the most recent issue of *Joint Force Quarterly* (issue 55, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2009), Col Om Prakash authored an article entitled, “The Efficacy of ‘Don't Ask, Don't Tell.’” Col Prakash, whose article was reviewed by the office of ADM Mullen and won the 2009 Secretary of Defense National Security Essay Competition, substantiates increasingly amplified calls from the military and the American people to allow the more than 65,000 active-duty Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender service members to serve openly and without compromising their integrity. After a comprehensive assessment of arguments on both sides, he concluded that “...it is not time for the administration to reexamine the issue; rather, it is time for the administration to examine how to implement the repeal of the ban.”

As you may know, on June 22 and August 27, I sent letters to President Obama reflecting the sense of 77 Members of Congress and calling on him to take leadership in working together with Congress to repeal and replace Don't Ask, Don't Tell. Furthermore, on July 27, I introduced an

amendment to the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2010 that would have prohibited the Defense Department from using funds therein to investigate or discharge our brave servicemen and women for “telling” their sexual orientation.

While President Obama has indicated his desire to have Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell repealed, Congress has yet to receive indication from the Executive that it is ready to proceed with a repeal process that requires leadership on all fronts. I strongly urge you to ensure the swift and overdue end of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell by working together with the Obama administration and Congress to establish a timeline, beginning now, within which to repeal the law and implement a policy of inclusion and non-discrimination.

Mr. Secretary, please find enclosed a copy of Col Prakash’s article and know that I stand ready to assist you, President Obama, and my colleagues in Congress in repealing Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell today. I am extremely proud of *all* the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces and truly appreciate the countless sacrifices that they continue to make every single day to protect this nation and the American people. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response. With warm regards, I remain,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alcee L. Hastings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress